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SERMON
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CENTENARY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM,

PREACHED IN THE
METHODIST CHURCH, ATHENS, GA.,

ON THE
25th OCTOBER, 1839.

BY REV. WHITEFOORD SMITH, A. M.

CHARLESTON:
PUBLISHED BY BURGESS & JAMES.

1840.



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Re. S. C. 1847
Life of J. B. McLeod, Jr.
of Charleston S.C.

SERMON.

Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.—REV. xix. 6, last clause.

To review the history of the past—to turn the eye of memory to the few verdant spots with which the barren waste of ages is occasionally variegated—to investigate the principles whose gradual operation has been followed by the happiest consequences—and especially, to contemplate the regular and well ordered developments of a wise and gracious Providence—is at once a pleasing and a profitable task. For while it is true, that the heart of a Christian, in recurring to the Church's history, is often saddened by the corruptions of the designing, and the errors of the ignorant—while at times he is ready to pause, and ask if the true spirit of Christ has not fled forever, and the ark of the covenant been forsaken—he is nevertheless soon called to witness the extension of an Almighty arm for the defence of a holy faith, and the protection of a sincere and humble people.

The timid disciple when his master had been crucified, in the weakness of his faith thought all hope had departed. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Little did he think that the very occurrences which were darkening his human hopes, and leading him almost to doubt the Messiahship of his Lord, were the very means which Heaven had appointed for certifying the world of the divinity of Jesus, and opening the gates of mercy to mankind. And so it often happens with the Christian in the con-

templation of the Church's history. When some promising plan for the correction of abuses has been frustrated—when some mighty champion of the faith has fallen—or when the enemies of religion seem for a while to triumph—he begins to tremble for the Church's safety, and is almost ready like Uzzah to put forth his hand to sustain the tottering ark. But how soon is he called to see, that it is not by human might or power that the greatest achievements are performed, but by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts. How soon are the enemies of the Lord driven back, without the seeming intervention of any extraordinary agency—how soon is the Church's prospect brightened by the most wonderful displays of Almighty power!

Scarce an age but has been marked by such features as these, from the earliest establishment of the Jewish theocracy until the present time. Well then may we rejoice, that the Host High ruleth among the armies of Heaven, and directeth in the affairs of men. And in consideration of the security of his church and people thus guaranteed, we may lift our voices with the innumerable multitude, and say, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

The occasion which convenes us to-day, and the associations which it excites, conspire to direct our attention to this most wholesome and consoling truth; *that all the vicissitudes in the Church's history are under the special supervision and control of the Church's Head, and will all be ordered and governed in such a way as shall secure her ultimate success and peace, and be promotive of the Divine glory.*

It is true that dispensations of Providence which are seemingly and temporarily adverse, often overwhelm and confound us; and for a while produce an appre-

hension that we are forsaken. But in all estimates of this sort we appear to be forgetful of the **ETERNITY** of God. It must always be remembered that God sees the end from the beginning, and is overruling the intermediate circumstances to bring "sweetness out of woe." This has been so often exhibited in individual experience that it ought to be admitted as a Christian axiom. The grief which for a while burdened the patriarch Jacob's heart on the account of the loss of Joseph, was turned into the highest joy when he beheld his son the governor of Egypt, and clasped him in his arms again. The sorrows of Israel's inspired bard, when his lyre was attuned to the softest tones of musing melancholy and spiritual dejection, led to the happy and wholesome acknowledgment of the divine goodness and mercy, and with a grateful heart he says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." The stern trial of the faith of Daniel, led to his miraculous deliverance and subsequent prosperity, and an admission of the omnipotence of Jehovah by the royal Mede. The death and burial of the persecuted Messiah, while they appeared to give a momentary triumph to his adversaries, and to shroud in darkness the prospects of his cause, were but the preparatory steps to his more glorious resurrection and the subsequent victories of his cross.

And what we have thus observed in individual examples, has been equally plain and true in the history of the collective church. A brief outline of some of the most important of these providential manifestations may very appropriately lead to the consideration of that particular interposition which gave rise first to the Methodist Societies in England, and subsequently to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

The selection of the family of Abraham to be the channel of communication of religious truth to the world, may perhaps be considered as the first institution of the church on earth. For though promises of future good and of deliverance from sin through the woman's seed had been previously made to the progenitors of our race, yet no commemorative rite to be performed by man as indicative of any covenant between God and him had been instituted until the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as the initiatory sign of the Jewish dispensation. The faith of the patriarch was of that strong and commanding kind which realized all that God had promised. "Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness." Here then, the first principle of religion was clearly set forth in the first institution of the church; viz: Justification by faith. The early trial of his faith by the command to offer up his son Isaac, showed, however, that faith was to be illustrated and perfected by good works; while the words of God to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect," manifested how important it was that those who sustained a covenant relation to God should be pure in heart, and blameless in life. These considerations are worthy to be borne in mind, as they will discover to us the unchangeableness of the divine character and attributes, which in all successive developments of mercy and revelations of grace to mankind have still held up these as the leading principles of true religion.

In the numerous variations of human fortune which attended the Jewish church, (for the government of the Jews being a theocracy, the nation and the church were one and the same,) we behold a striking fulfilment of

the position we have advanced. Their long protracted bondage in Egypt was followed by their miraculous deliverance, and their sojourn in the wilderness by their ultimate establishment in Canaan. And when from time to time their frequent rebellions subjected them to the divine displeasure, and brought upon them the judgments of God, still was his tender care abundantly manifested for the few who were faithful. Even the rage of an impious king and queen which destroyed the altars and the prophets of God, was so restrained as that Elijah should be saved; and in the midst of so great a defection as prevailed in those times, a holy seed was yet preserved who bowed not the knee to Baal.

Nor was God's peculiar providence over his church less distinguishable in the days of the Babylonish captivity; and especially in the favourable return of that captivity, at the expiration of its appointed time. In all the dangers that threatened them—in all the opposition that was made to their progress in their holy work—in all the violence of their adversaries—and in all the consciousness of their weakness—and yet in the astonishing success which crowned the labour of the remnant of Israel who repaired Jerusalem and restored the temple, we cannot fail to discern the hand of Him who overrules all things for his church's good, and defends it in its greatest peril.

To the mind of any human observer, it must have been a subject of the utmost perplexity to conceive what was to become of the church, or what and where the church should be, when the obstinate unbelief of the Jews led to their final overthrow. The Church had hitherto had a "local habitation and a name." Men had been accustomed to associate with the very idea of the

church, the gorgeously decorated temple, with its sacrifices, and services, and priesthood. But when the Deity had departed from that temple to enter it no more, the ritual and all the circumstance of the religion "was but a lifeless corpse, like royalty in the funereal chamber. The torch of the Roman soldier was enkindling to fire the devoted pile, and reduce both the priesthood and the temple to ashes which the winds of heaven should scatter, and which no power on earth should be able to gather together again."

Upon what point then might the eye of the observer rest, and say, here is the church? So inadequate and often unjust are our ideas of things, that we should have been at a loss to comprehend the idea of a church, apart from the external arrangement of its forms, and the manifestation of some temporal head. But how differently did God regard it. In the few who had received the Messiah, and continued in his doctrine, He recognized his church on earth. And though there appeared no superior among them, who might claim the relative position of an extraordinary minister, or high priest—though no place could lay any legitimate claim to being the seat of such superior wisdom and authority—and according to our mode of estimation, the church collective might be nowhere found; yet were all the regenerate and sanctified Christians of that day, viewed by the Almighty as his elect church. And hence we may see how preposterous and absurd are the claims which in later times have been set up for an ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the faith of the church, either by an individual pontiff, or an united hierarchy. Whatever offices expediency may suggest from time to time as useful and proper for the better service of the church of God, we should at least be extremely careful how

we attach the importance of an original and fundamental institution to that which apostles themselves never claimed as such, and which is contrary to the very genius of Christianity.

Yet within but a few centuries after the ascension of the Redeemer, and the simple and unambitious ministry of his apostles, we find the same love of worldly distinction, and the same association of religion with external pomp and grandeur, which had marked the character of the corrupt Jewish priesthood in its last stages, manifested in those who claimed to be "*lords over God's heritage.*" But when the corruptions of the papacy had reached their highest point—when forgetful of the direction of Christ himself, "whosoever among you will be greatest, let him be the servant of all," they aimed only at universal mastery and dominion—when like the Jewish rulers they had entirely perverted the character and objects of the dispensation which God had committed unto them; then was the same almighty power manifested for their overthrow, which had been displayed in the destruction of the Jewish hierarchy. The crown which had long bowed itself in prostrate reverence before the crosier, was rescued from its dominion—the long-venerated institutions of the church became objects of contempt—the eyes of the intelligent were now opened to discern the errors and iniquities of the pontificate itself—the bold and fearless preaching of Grostete and Wicliff prepared the way for the later reformers—and the trumpet-tongued announcement of evangelical truth by Luther and Melancthon and others, awoke the world from its spiritual reverie, and called it back again to the simplicity of its early faith, and the purity of its original constitution.

We might be ready to conclude, in view of the many changes and calamities which have attended the church, that even *she* was liable to the same decay and dissolution which we perceive to attach to all human institutions. But the text solves the difficulty by teaching us that the Omnipotent overrules all things for his glory ; and that the true cause of the many disasters which befall the church, is to be found in her perversion of the designs of Providence, and her failure to accomplish the purposes for which she was constituted. For it is a truth not more clearly stated in the sacred scriptures, than confirmed by the history of the nations which have succeeded each other in the annals of time, that a neglect to make a proper use of the blessings which heaven confers, or a wicked and wilful perversion of those favors, leads inevitably to their withdrawal, and to the consequent ruin of those from whom they are taken away. Thus in regular succession have the Egyptian and Assyrian, the Median and Persian, the Jewish and Grecian and Roman empires passed into oblivion. Each occupied its proud and commanding position for a time—each spoiled its predecessor, and wore the crown of triumph—each had its day of grace, its visitation of mercy—each had the ruin of the former to warn it of its peril—each neglected or perverted heaven's high favors, and thus lighted the fires of its own destruction—and now their mouldering relics tell how wide spread were the flames which consumed their glory, and how terrible the vengeance that destroyed the destroyers.

Equally true is the application of this position to religious systems. For while it will readily be admitted that the star of Divine revelation has shone with increasing lustre from age to age, and that the discoveries

of grace have regularly exhibited a wider and more enlarged benevolence, yet the beams of that star have gradually passed from those who rejected its light, and fallen upon other parts of the moral world; and the illustrations of that benevolence have been made to those who had not already resisted its gracious efficacy, and thrown themselves without the compass of its embrace.

In investigating the changes which have taken place in the history of nations, and comparing them with the changes which have occurred in the history of the Church, we shall mark one point of considerable difference. It is that while in the former, the results which have been effected were *designed* by those who were the instruments of their accomplishment; in the latter, the effects have been such as were *neither designed nor anticipated* by those who were the means of bringing them about. The plans of statesmen—the harangues of orators—the campaigns of warriors, were intended to result in the political elevation of their own states, and in the downfall of others; and the anticipations of success were probably connected with considerations of extended territory—of accumulated glory—of universal empire. But when in the synod or the council, the reformer inveighed against abuses, or levelled the force of his argument against heresy, or called back his brethren to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, he had devised no scheme of another church—he aimed at no schism in the body of Christ—he sought no laurels in the field of adventure—he entertained no ambitious project of self-aggrandizement. These would have been inconsistent with the very character of Christianity. It had received from the hand of the Deity its own peculiar features, and for the

anathemas of heaven against him who should impiously dare to lay in Zion any other foundation than that which was laid, Jesus Christ. The great object of every pious reformer, was, to keep in view the simple and original organization of the Christian church. They could not but remember, that the great curse of man from the beginning had been his departure from the wise restrictions which heaven had imposed, and an attempt to regale himself with what he might suppose to be slight and innocent novelties. The eye of a pious Christian could not contemplate any innovation upon the usages of the primitive church, or such as had been sanctioned by antiquity and owned by the blessing of God, without the liveliest apprehension, if not the deepest horror. And this may account for what has sometimes been considered a deficiency of moral courage in those who having denounced the corruptions of the church, fearing afterwards lest they may have gone too far and intruded with too daring step upon some time hallowed institution, have withdrawn from the point to which their zeal may at first have carried them. Who can suppose that when Wicliff raised his voice against the order of begging friars—the supremacy of the Pope—the “Cæsarean pomp of the Episcopal order”—the corruptions of the sacraments and of penance, he ever thought of the establishment of any other church, or of being the author of schism? Who can believe that when Luther declaimed against the sale of indulgences, and preached the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith, he aimed at such results as followed his labours? They both felt the necessity of reforming the abuses which had crept by degrees into the church—they both desired so to operate on public opinion as to bring back the church to primitive and

apostolic simplicity ; but God gradually unfolded his purposes, and made even the wrath of man to praise him, while the remainder of wrath he restrained.

All reformations in the Christian church must be brought about by following up the openings of Divine Providence. And all who desire to be the instruments of good to their fellow men, must not run in advance of those manifestations, *but always follow after the indications of the divine will are clearly made.* We would be unwilling to trust the reformation of all the errors and evils that may now exist in connection with Christianity to an assembled synod of the wisest and the best of men who ever lived. Such an act would be a voluntary divestiture of God's superintendence. But the church's true security is found in the consideration, that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Alternate for a long time were the external successes of the Roman and Protestant parties. But the blessing of Heaven accompanied the labours of the Reformers, and year after year witnessed the wider dissemination of evangelical principles, and the firmer establishment of the Protestant cause. It was a remarkable proof that Heaven did not intend that the cause of Christ should be dependent upon the secular power for its maintenance, but should be sustained from above, that while the most vigorous opposition was made to it by the civil power, the years of persecution did not retard its onward march and more extended triumphs ; but when the alliance of the state removed the offence of the cross, and the civil power offered immunities to Christianity, then "the gold became dim, and the fine gold changed." Corruption followed corruption, and error succeeded error, until the abominations of the mystic Babylon made her the reproach of the world.

And so again did it happen with the church of the reformation. When the simple and pure principles of that church became the creed of England—when the persecuted faith rose to the dignity of an establishment—when the civil and ecclesiastical powers were again attempted to be blended; it was found that there existed no moral affinity between them, and that religion in this unnatural connection would either lead to intolerance and bigotry, or else become corrupted by the association, and lose its intrinsic and spiritual excellence.

Without entering into the merits of the question of church establishments, or denying that there may be some advantages growing out of the system; we cannot but maintain what the history of the past has so fully proven, that whenever the church's dependence is placed upon the state, and ecclesiastical immunities are conferred by the civil power, the purity and excellence of the system is marred, and like the Nazarite when shorn, its strength has departed.

In the ranks of the clergy of the English church, have been found many of the most distinguished men of modern days, both for piety and learning. But alas! how fruitless were the efforts of her noblest sons, to correct the evils which they saw, and censured, and deplored.

It was at a period of great defection in the spiritual character of the English church, that the denomination now known as **METHODIST** took its rise. In vain had the souls of Burnet, and Butler, and Secker, been grieved at the prevailing infidelity of their times, as well as at the worldliness of the clergy themselves. In vain had they expostulated, and complained, and mourned. The times were still unimproved. Although possessing a creed and liturgy pure and excellent—though

protected and maintained by the civil government—and though urged on by the spirits of such men as we have just named, who endeavored to uphold the standard of righteousness amid the delinquencies of priests and people; yet still were many of the clergy dissolute, and thousands of the people wrapped in the profoundest spiritual stupor. It was at this juncture in the history of the church of the reformation, that it pleased God to raise up and send out into his harvest those pious and indefatigable men through whose labours the world has been eminently blessed, and who in pursuing the indications of Divine Providence, became the founders of the Methodist Church.

If we go to Oxford to witness the origin of Methodism in the education of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and others, we find them industrious inquirers after truth, searching the word of God like the honorable Bereans, solicitous that that word should make them free. If we survey the organization of this collegiate association, or the subsequent institution of the Fetter-lane society, in 1738, we shall find that these associations were only for purposes of mutual improvement in experimental religion. And indeed the still later organization of the Methodist societies in London in 1739, was but designed for the edification of those who had put themselves under the pastoral supervision of Mr. Wesley. In all these arrangements, however, *the Providence of God was followed*. No concerted plan was in the way of accomplishment---no schism in the church was contemplated---but the men through whose instrumentality it pleased God to convert many souls, were only labouring to keep them steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Had the evangelical preaching of Wesley and White-

field not been opposed by the churchmen of their day, we have every reason to believe that neither the unusual, and as many deemed them, disorderly practices which grew out of their necessities, such as field-preaching and the like, would have taken place; nor would these societies have ever been otherwise known than as associations for spiritual improvement among those who were within the pale of the English church. It was closing the doors of the churches of the establishment against them that sent Whitefield and Wesley into the fields; and it was the persecutions raised against them by churchmen which in many cases occasioned the riotous disturbances, the whole guilt of which has been attributed to them. They set up no new standards of doctrine---no articles of faith contrary to those of the Establishment---they preached no truths but those which the Reformers and all the evangelical clergy of the English church had preached before them---they aimed at no more than the Bishop of Sarum and others had attempted, to arouse the spirits of the pious to more diligent investigation of the truths of Christianity, and to more untiring efforts after all the fulness of grace proposed in the Gospel, as well as to awake the lukewarm and hypocritical---the Ephesian who had lost the zeal of his first love, and the Laodicean who complacently deceived himself with the belief of his righteousness while destitute of all the fruits of holiness---and at the same time to stir up the latent energy of a long stifled conscience in the heart of the sinner, and lead him to the Lamb of God. These were their lofty objects---objects infinitely beyond all the tinsel and drapery of the Episcopal office, or even of the Papacy itself. It has always fallen to the lot of those whom Heaven has appointed for the accomplishment

of its great and noble purposes, to be stigmatized by those who are far their inferiors, as *ambitious of human distinction*. The sordid souls of such defamers are inadequate to comprehend the motives of those they censure, or to discover the encouragements and consolations by which they are sustained. "*But their witness is in Heaven, and their record is on high.*"

The very means which were used for the suppression of the truth, were overruled by the Lord for its still greater extension. If any proof were wanting that the Fathers of the Methodist church aimed not at the establishment of any new denomination, nor contemplated any innovation upon the order of things to which they had been used; it would readily be found in the fact of their great reluctance to depart from the forms to which they had been accustomed. Nor would they consent to such departure till the will of God seemed clearly indicated. But when the finger of God pointed the path—when the pillar of the cloud of providential manifestation was lifted up and moved onward; they knew but one impulse, and that was, Moses like, to follow. They acted upon the principle which has ever governed the truly great, that "*consequences belong to God.*" How far beyond even their highest hopes and most ardent anticipations, has their labour been crowned with success!

But if the doctrines which the Wesleys and their associates preached were those of the established church, and if their educational prejudices were all in favor of that church; it may be asked, in what did they differ from her? The answer to this must be—from the doctrines and principles of the English church they differed in nothing; but from the worldly and sensual practices of many of her clergy, they differed

widely. They saw the loveliest form of Christianity before them, but instead of being instinct with energy and life, it was inefficient and dead. They sought at Heaven's pure shrine the fire of the quickening spirit, to revivify this death-cold form. They saw the principles of a pure and holy faith, belied by the practice of a faithless world; and they sought to blend in harmonious action, a holy faith and a spotless life. They preached the doctrines of the Reformation with the simplicity and energy of Reformers. They aimed to give to the Gospel of Jesus Christ the practical character which it was designed to possess; and desired that Religion, like the leaven in the lump, might diffuse its influence and power throughout the entire man. The doctrines which they felt that the necessities of the times most imperiously required, were those of justification by faith—the witness of the spirit—righteousness of life—and sanctification of heart. They set forth the prominent truth, that the merit of the atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord was commensurate with the world's wants. They urged the propriety of a present salvation. They showed that the blessings of the Gospel were provided for the present enjoyment of those who believe, and that by the exercise of a complete reliance upon the Saviour, we might have peace with God. They proclaimed that he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. And again, that he that is born of God doth not commit sin; and that he that hath his hope in him purifieth himself even as *He* is pure. And these are the great distinguishing doctrines of Christian revelation, some of which, (as we have already shown) were given to Abraham, in the institution of the first church. If any one will calmly investigate the various dispensations of

grace which have been successively given to the world, he shall find that these men swerved not from the truth in the principles of their faith, but were built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. And this ground they maintained; in nothing terrified by their adversaries, but upheld by the consideration "*that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*" While they thus maintained the truth of God they felt secure: and though they contemplated no invasion of established customs, yet if these were necessarily consequent upon the promulgation of the truth, they would not compromise that truth for the dearest institutions which time had hallowed.

When the Jewish council had apprehended some of the apostles of our Lord, and were discussing the best means to suppress the preaching of the Gospel, Gamaliel's advice was, to refrain from those men, and let them alone: for if their work was of man it would come to nought of itself; but if it was of God they could not overthrow it, but might be found fighting even against God. If, then, we survey the history of Methodism, and test its claim to the character of pure and evangelical religion by its success and triumphs, we may well assert that like the burning bush it has been unconsumed by the fires of persecution, and the fury of malignant hate, only because the hand of God was extended for its defence. How has it spread since the days of Wesley! Since the time when EIGHT or TEN persons came to him in London, asking spiritual counsel, just *One hundred years ago*, what have been its triumphs! Truly to this branch of the Christian church may be applied the parable which likens the kingdom of Heaven to a grain of mustard-seed. From a small

and despised band whose very name was designed to be a reproach, this denomination has increased and waxed strong. Could the venerated Wesley look out upon the congregated Methodists on this day as they are sending up their spiritual rejoicings to God, he might well commemorate the goodness and mercy of God to his spiritual family in Jesus, with the words of the Patriarch; "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." If the angelic hosts hover over us to-day, and contemplate the lovely sight which presents itself in almost all parts of the world, of more than a million of souls rejoicing in the spiritual heritage which their fathers have bequeathed them---if they look upon England and America rearing up monuments in token of their gratitude---not vain and pompous, but practical and profitable for the still wider diffusion of Christian light---if they should survey the Missionary field, and find in almost every clime the standards of the cross which this people have raised, and their Missionaries burning with holy zeal, holding forth the word of life,

"As they preach it by day, and by dewy eve,
"And when night has darkened the plain ;"

may they not exclaim in the language of the prophet when he looked upon the encampments of Israel; "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

Extraordinary as were the successes of Methodism in the earliest periods of its history, they have not been suspended, nor have they ceased in later times. But

Year on year in swift succession,
Witness'd grander conquests still ;
Saw the deep and wide procession,
Journeying to Sion's hill.

Now the hundredth year is closing,
 Mark the congregated band,
 Still their banners high exposing
 Pressing for Emmanuel's land.

From the climes of classic story,
 Where Apostles raised their voice ;
 'Mid the scenes of ancient glory,
 Bidding them in Christ rejoice.
 From Judea's hills and mountains,
 Where once burned prophetic fire—
 From her bright and "sunny fountains,"
 Where her Psalmist touched the lyre—

To the islands of the ocean,
 To the inland tribes of men,
 Come the calls to high devotion,
 Bidding them be born again.
 Asia, Afric, Europe waken,
 At the spirit stirring call ;
 Now America is taken
 To His arms, who died for all.

"By their *fruits*, ye shall know them." We ask not only what have been the successes which have crowned the labours of our fathers, but a question of much more importance is to be answered when we ask, what good have they accomplished? The mere numerical strength of a million, may be nothing in morals. What, then, have been the works of Methodism? And what use has she made of the influence which her successes have given her? Has she been idle, while all her sisters in the heavenly company have been vigorous and diligent? When the Providence of God called her into being, the nominal Christian world was in an apathy, apparently unconscious of the privileges of their religion, and of the duties it imposed. Methodism was called, "Christianity in earnest." Opening her eyes upon the wide field of the world all ripe to the harvest, she sent up her cry to God to raise up and send forth labourers into his harvest. And when the answer was given in the unction that rested upon many, she paused, not because the choice of instruments was not what human wisdom might have anticipated. Though the tall and stately sons of Jesse were passed by, and the

holy oil was poured upon the shepherd boy; she recognized in him the Lord's anointed, and welcomed him to his appointed work. She looked out upon a world mantled in the sable shades of heathenism and sin, and she put her presses in operation, and sent out upon that world a tide of instruction and light. She saw the lack of labourers in the mighty conflict with the powers of darkness; and she raised her funds and sent her standard-bearers to uphold the truth, and breast the torrent of iniquity and dark idolatry. She heard the cries of the poor and fatherless, and her sympathies were aroused, and she organized herself for efficient action in their behalf. She beheld in the Gospel that provision was made adequate to all the necessities of our poor human nature, and she seized that Gospel and running, called to the unfortunate and helpless and disconsolate, saying "Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Thus did she kindle a fire of holy emulation among her spiritual sisters. They saw the mighty stir---they witnessed what might be effected by a living faith in Jesus Christ, and in the word of promise. A new era of the world began. Antinomianism fled before the spirit of godliness, and lo! the cry of the thoughtless and profane became the language of penitence and prayer, asking "what shall we do to be saved?"

The first gusts of persecution passed, she shook herself unharmed, and welcomed even her jealous sisters to a participation in the holy work. And now what has not their joint co-operation effected? What has been achieved for the cross of Christ in the last hundred years, but serves to show what might be done in

a hundred years to come, if the same spirit that characterized our fathers, shall distinguish their sons. Then, brethren, to the work. The world is the field, and the work is not done till the last obdurate heart is led captive to the cross, and the last idol shrine has fallen---till the hearts of men are purified by grace, and all the work of sin shall be destroyed. We in this Western world are among the fruits of their labours. Let us see to it that our pure and holy faith be kept untarnished; and let our good works, our constant and burning zeal still show, that Methodism is "Christianity in earnest."

In conclusion, brethren, let us remember, that if we would avoid the doom which has overtaken so many before us, we must be faithful in the improvement of what has been committed to us. If we abuse or pervert the blessings which Heaven has so liberally bestowed upon us---if we permit our zeal to diminish or our love to grow cold; we are pursuing the surest method of spoiling our heritage and desecrating our Zion. And, as the glory departed from the Jewish temple, and from the Asiatic and African churches, so if we leave the principles of our faith, or the integrity of our lives, it shall be written on us, and upon our shrines, "*ICHABOD, for the glory is departed.*"

Time will not permit nor do we deem it necessary to enter into the particulars of the early history of Methodism in England or in this country. A fund of information upon this subject is within the reach of all. Nor shall we detain you further with any minute consideration of the number gathered into the church through the labours of the Methodist ministry; nor with a detail of their Missionary operations. All these are embraced in the regularly published statistics of our church. Nor do we desire that even so much as the present occasion has

called upon us to say in reference to the history of Methodism, should be understood as spoken boastingly. Far from it. Our sincere wish in these commemorative services, is to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord to us, and to render unto him all the glory and praise for what He hath done. "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

How abundant are the consolations which the subject administers to us in view of the future ! Though many a dark and heavy cloud may gather over the church—though her enemies may appear numerous and strong ; stil she is safe, for the mighty God is her refuge, and underneath her are the everlasting arms. However feeble she may be, and however persecuted, her deliverer is near and she need fear no evil. Let our faith anticipate for her a brighter and a better day. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her : tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces ; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever : he will be our guide even unto death."

Soon shall the bright star of her glory reach its meridian, and the prophecies concerning her be fulfilled. Her open arms shall embrace the world ; and her sons shall come from far, and her daughters from the ends of the earth. For "in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills ; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. "*Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" AMEN and AMEN.









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